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**TTP BLOODS GANG MEMBER PLEADS GUILTY TO RACKETEERING  
CONSPIRACY**

**Baltimore**, Maryland - Van Sneed, age 32, of Baltimore, Maryland, pleaded guilty today to conspiracy to conduct and participate in the activities of a racketeering enterprise known as the Tree Top Piru Bloods gang (TTP Bloods), announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein and Baltimore City State's Attorney Patricia C. Jessamy. This case is the result of a long-term joint investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office and the United States Attorney's Office.

"Federal racketeering prosecutions are a powerful tool to pursue violent gangs and reduce crime," said U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein.

"Here is proof," says ATF Special Agent in Charge Gregory K. Gant, "that we are making great progress in the war against gang violence - one violent offender at a time."

According to the plea agreement, TTP Bloods originated from a street gang known as "the Bloods" that was formed in Los Angeles, California in the early 1970s. As time passed, the Bloods spread to other locations and broke into individual "sets." One such Bloods set based in Compton, California was called Piru Bloods. From this set emerged a subset known as Tree Top Pirus (TTP). The name derived from a group of streets in Compton named after trees.

TTP spread throughout the country, including Maryland. TTP in Maryland has its roots in a local gang which began in the Washington County Detention Center in Hagerstown, Maryland in about 1999. The gang was formed for mutual protection in response to the aggression of other inmates from Baltimore. TTP spread throughout Maryland mostly as a result of recruitment from inside Maryland prisons. Over time, a group of female gang members formed a subset of TTP known as the Tree Top Pirettes.

According to the statement of facts, as part of the conspiracy gang members of TTP would meet regularly to discuss, past acts of violence and other crimes committed by gang members against rival gang members and others; to notify one another about gang members who were arrested or incarcerated; to discuss the disciplining of TTP gang members; to discuss police interactions with gang members; to share with one another the identities of individuals who may

be cooperating with law enforcement and propose actions to be taken against those individuals; to plan and agree upon the commission of future crimes, including murders, robberies, drug trafficking, and assaults, and the means to cover up these crimes; and to reinforce gang rules. TTP gang members and associates of TTP purchased, maintained and circulated a collection of firearms for use in criminal activity by TTP members. In addition, TTP gang members and associates of TTP committed acts of murder, and other acts of violence against rival gang members and imposed discipline within TTP itself, and committed violent acts on other occasions as deemed necessary.

According to the plea agreement, on January 20, 2007, Van Sneed shot a rival Crip gang member in a gang dispute. On January 29, 2008, in a recorded telephone call, Van Sneed asked a TTP co-conspirator to find a buyer willing to pay a particular price for a quantity of drugs and in February 2008, in a series of recorded telephone calls with another TTP co-conspirator, Van Sneed discussed his efforts to obtain a firearm from a subordinate TTP member.

Sneed faces a maximum sentence of life in prison followed by five years of supervised release. U.S. District Judge William D. Quarles, Jr. has scheduled sentencing for September 9, 2008 at 9:30 a.m.

Twenty-five additional gang members have been charged in the racketeering conspiracy. Their charges are pending.

United States Attorney Rosenstein and Baltimore City State's Attorney Jessamy praised the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Baltimore City Police Department, Baltimore County Police Department, Wicomico County State's Attorney Office, Wicomico County Sheriff's Office, Washington County Narcotics Task Force, Western Correctional Institution, North Branch Correctional Institution, Anne Arundel County Police Department, the Hagerstown Police Department and the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services for their investigation of this Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force case.

Mr. Rosenstein and Mrs. Jessamy also thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven Levin, and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Chris Mason, a cross-designated Baltimore City Assistant State's Attorney, who are prosecuting the case and Assistant State's Attorney LaRai Forrest who assisted in the prosecution.